

How often do we think we would do things better if only we were in charge? Then when we actually get the opportunity, how different things appear!

Criticizing Others

When it comes to being an armchair quarterback, or armchair baseball player, etc., I doubt anyone could do a better job than me of complaining! Actually, I'm more on the cases of the officials of any particular sport than I am on the case of the various athletes. Additionally, I'm fairly critical these days of coaches, too. After all, look at all the experience I've had! I've been watching sports all of my life, played most of them, and have a pretty good idea of what should and should not be. Listen to my commentary on the couch during any given game, and ***I have all the answers!***

The truth is that with all my experience playing, watching and commenting on sports, nobody really thinks that I am ***qualified*** to coach, play or get payed for my commentary. There is a big difference between watching and actually participating. The athleticism is great, the pressure on the coaches and players is great, and every time a sports official makes a call, one-half of the audience will disagree with him. Seriously, who really wants those jobs? They are much more difficult than we usually give them credit for.

Likewise, I have had great disdain for some of the juries and their decisions in recent years. Haven't you ever read a trial and its verdict and thought to yourself, "Well now, if I were on that jury, I'd have had that guy strung up!"?

I have been privileged to be on several juries both in Texas and Missouri. When you are one of the twelve jurors and a person's future is in your hands, then you better believe that it is an entirely different ballgame! You listen carefully to the testimony, the evidence, and the lawyers. You carefully consider all the factors, and try to follow the instructions given by the judge. There is a great deal of pressure in trying to make the ***right*** decision. It is anything but easy.

Being Thankful

The point I am getting to is this. We have *armchair preachers* in the brotherhood who have ***never*** preached a bad sermon yet! Then again, they have never preached a real sermon either. But sometimes we need to be more considerate of those who preach, teach, and work at the God-given job of educating brethren. It takes a lot of work to study God's Word, understand the text, and then figure out a way to relate that to your students or audience in a way that they can easily assimilate. We have many teachers in this congregation who work tirelessly at their jobs without ever getting a break. Do we appreciate and thank them for their faithful efforts? Do we offer to help and do our part in the process?

Furthermore, it is difficult being an ***elder***. The qualifications are steep and most brethren will never attain to them. But once again, we have a number of *armchair elders* who constantly give their take on what the elders have decided, and who would always make the *perfect decision*, if only they could! Brethren, there is a reason the inspired record contains the following words:

"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.' Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality" (1 Tim. 5:17-21).

There are times when spiritual leaders deserve criticism and rebuke. But far more often we need to "*walk a mile in their shoes*" before we complain. Submitting to the elders' authority and wisdom, encouraging their efforts, and offering to help in any way would be a lot more productive. Besides, God hears every word we say, and we will give an account for them. Be careful with your thoughts and words.